

ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

October 30, 2014



LINKS:

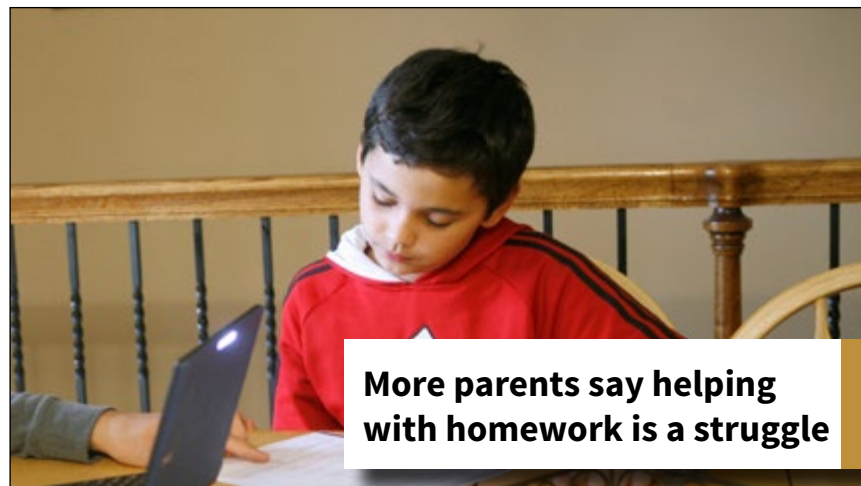
- Learning in 13 districts won't stop due to winter weather
- Kentucky Board of Education considers new social studies, arts and humanities standards, changes to accountability model
- Number of students taking AP tests up; scores higher
- Four Kentucky public schools win Blue Ribbon honors



All photos by Amy Wallot unless otherwise noted



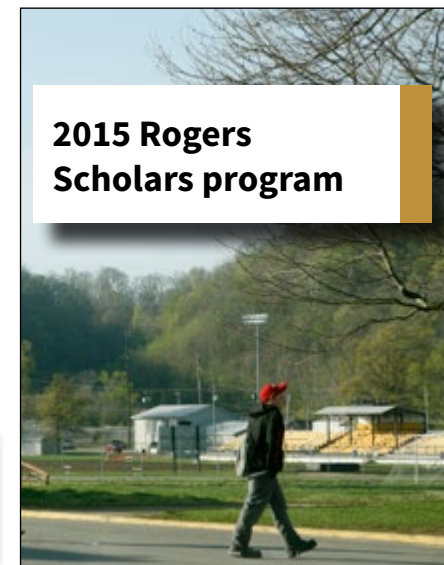
Moving in the right direction



More parents say helping with homework is a struggle



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Twitter chat

Parents: Want to chat with educators? A parent/teacher Twitter chat takes place at 9 p.m. every Wednesday. To participate or just follow the conversation, use the hashtag #PTchat.

Moving in the right direction

By Terry Holliday, education commissioner

The Kentucky Department of Education just released the third year of results under the Unbridled Learning College/Career-Readiness for All accountability model, and while we still have much work to do, the data show we are moving in the right direction and there is much reason to celebrate.

The eyes of the nation have been focused on Kentucky since we became the first state to adopt new English/language arts and mathematics standards, as mandated by Senate Bill 1 (2009). While we saw a big drop in student performance that first year, as expected due to the increased rigor of the standards, we are starting to see some significant progress, as predicted, in student performance evidenced by results on the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP). Kentucky students are proving to the rest of the nation that the standards are working and helping to better prepare them for college and careers.

Since teachers first taught the new Kentucky Core Academic Standards in the 2011-12 school year, the percentages of students performing at the Proficient and Distinguished levels in reading and mathematics are up between two and nine percentage points, with the largest gains coming at the elementary level, followed by middle school. Gains at the high school level, however, have not been as strong and, in fact, are nonexistent in math.

We believe there are several reasons for this. First, we have only one test in reading and one in math at the high school level through our End-of-Course exam system. Second, these classes are not as well aligned with the new standards as those at the earlier levels. And finally, students have not benefited from the strong foundation laid by more rigorous coursework in elementary and middle school, so there may be some learning gaps. We will be addressing all of these issues in coming months.

We also saw some positive news with our student groups that traditionally underperform compared with their peers. The percentage of students in this “gap group” (African American, Hispanic, Native American, special education, poverty and limited English proficiency students) scoring at the top levels of Proficient or Distinguished is up in most



cases from when we implemented Unbridled Learning three years ago. Granted, we still have a long way to go, but we are moving in the right direction.

In addition, the four-year high school graduation rate is up from 86.1 percent in 2012-13 to 87.4 percent in the 2013-14 school year – another positive move.

As the name states, our ultimate goal under this system of assessment and accountability, created as a result of Senate Bill 1 (2009), is to ensure all of our students graduate from high school ready for the next step in life – whether that is a two-year or a four-year college, a post-secondary training program, the military or the workforce. We’ve made great progress toward that goal in the past five years.

When we first started measuring the readiness of our students, only about a third (34 percent) had the knowledge and skills needed to be successful at the next level. Today, I’m happy to report that we’ve nearly doubled that number, with a college/career-readiness rate of 62.3 percent. We estimate that this amounts to a cost savings for students and parents of nearly \$15 million – money they’ll save by not having to enroll in non-credit-bearing postsecondary remedial courses.

Parents can see all the results for the state and any school or district through the online School Report Cards. I invite you to take a look for yourself.

Public education in Kentucky is moving in the right direction – thanks to the hard work of our teachers, administrators, parents and students. We all should take time to celebrate this success, but also consider what the data tell us about how we can help even more students become proficient and prepared for success – college- and career-ready – in the coming year.



More parents say helping with homework is a struggle

It's not just kids who dread homework. Parents also struggle with the nightly workload, a recent survey showed.

For the second year in a row, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) asked parents whether they are ever unable to help with their kids' homework.

The online survey of more than 1,000 parents revealed that more than 60 percent of parents with children in kindergarten through 8th grade have trouble helping with homework, up from 49.1 percent in 2013. More than 25 percent of parents said the reason is that they are too busy, up from just over 20 percent in 2013.

Parents also said that understanding the subject matter (33.5 percent) and pushback from their kids (41 percent) were reasons that helping with homework is a struggle.

"Time is precious, and the responsibility for teaching our families can seem like a harrowing task, but truly the tools to make it easy and natural are readily available to all of us", said Emily Kirkpatrick, vice president of Louisville-based NCFL. "Use everyday moments to your advantage, like breakfast or riding in the car, to spark children's curiosity and create habits that feed their natural hunger for learning."

NCFL offers these tips to help parents throughout the school year:

- Get in a routine: Set up a sleep schedule, regular outdoor activities and a dedicated time for hitting the books—and be consistent. Use positive reinforcement to create strong learning habits.
- Stay one step ahead: Talk to teachers about classroom learning goals and how to build excitement around them at home.
- Spur imagination: Infuse homework with wonder by asking relevant questions: "How can math help you cook?" or "How are mountains made?"



Dates set for 2015 Governor's School for the Arts program

The 2015 Governor's School for the Arts (GSA) will take place June 21 through July 11. The deadline to apply is Dec. 31. Student chosen for an audition will receive an email on Jan. 30 with the time, date and location of the audition. The email will also have information about the recommendation process, which will be open until Feb. 13. Recommendation letters should not be sent with the application.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the audition and review process.

In addition to GSA, applications are being accepted for the 2014 ArtsShops, which provide a similar immersion experience to GSA but on a smaller scale. Each fall, GSA schedules four workshops to provide high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors with the opportunity to participate in a daylong arts enrichment event close to home.

The ArtShops will be held at these locations:

Nov. 15: Bowling Green, Bowling Green High School

Nov. 15: Morehead, Morehead State University

Nov. 22: Danville, Centre College

Nov. 22: Paducah, McCracken County High School



Students must attend a Kentucky high school or home school in Kentucky to attend. For more information on GSA or ArtShops, click [here](#).



Applications open for 2015 Rogers Scholars program

The Center for Rural Development is accepting applications for the 2015 summer session of the Rogers Scholars youth leadership program. This intensive one-week program is for students who will be high school juniors in 2015-16 within the center's 45-county primary service area in southern and eastern Kentucky. The program emphasizes the development of technological skills and builds in participants a sense of leadership, entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to rural Kentucky.

The 2015 programs, which are free, will be June 21-26 and July 12-17. Lodging and meals are included.

Students apply during their sophomore year and are selected through a competitive screening process. The application deadline is Jan. 31.

Applicants may download a copy of the application form from the center's youth programs website at www.centeryouthprograms.com.

For more information, contact Delaney Stephens at (606) 677-6000 or by email at youth@centertech.com.

Martin Luther King Jr. essay, poetry and visual art contests

Kentucky students are invited to enter the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. essay, poetry and visual art contests. The theme is "In His Footsteps ... the Dream Today." See the individual contest criteria for the [essay](#), [poetry](#) and [visual arts](#) competitions for grade eligibility requirements as well as the entry form.

Entries must be received by Nov. 21. The competition is sponsored by the Governor's Office of Minority Empowerment in cooperation with the Kentucky Department of Education. The award winners will be honored at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration on Jan. 15 in Frankfort.

For more information, contact the office of minority empowerment at (502) 564-2611 or go to the website at www.ome.ky.gov.



Winners of the 2014 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. essay, poetry and visual art contests stand with Education Commissioner Terry Holliday.



Ben Greenwell, a 5th-grader at Blessed Sacrament School in Fort Mitchell, was one of the essay contest winners in 2014.

Photos by Marvin Young, Governor's Office of Minority Empowerment

Prescription drug abuse prevention public service announcement contest

The Kentucky attorney general's office is holding its annual prescription drug abuse prevention public service announcement contest for middle and high school students. The contest is part of Attorney General Jack Conway's statewide initiative to warn kids about the dangers of misusing prescription drugs.

Middle and high school students can produce a 30-second video that shows the risks of prescription drug abuse. The first-place winner will receive an Apple iPad donated by the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI). The runner-up will receive a \$100 Amazon.com gift card donated by the Kentucky Pharmacists Association.

The deadline is Dec. 8, and winners will be announced Dec. 15.

Last year's winning video, produced by students at Calloway County High School, can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/5DrcDsZOFkg>. Winning videos are posted on the attorney general's website and distributed to television stations by the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy.

For information about how to submit a video, see the attorney general's website at <http://ag.ky.gov/rxabuse>.



Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy



Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

Free report can help Kentucky families with college search

Families of Kentucky students can get a free, personalized "Getting the Facts" report to help with choosing the right college.

The report from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) provides estimates of how much the family can expect to spend and how much financial aid the student may receive. Families can get estimates for up to six colleges across the United States.

To get a free report, students must log into or set up a MyKHEAA account at www.kheaa.com. They should then select their state of residence, date they expect to graduate from high school and click on the "Getting the Facts" link.

Students and parents must provide information about estimated income and assets, and students must provide their Social Security number to set up a MyKHEAA account.

For more information, call the KHEAA College Access Team at (800) 928-8926.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES), need-based grants and other programs to help students pay for higher education expenses.

To learn how to plan and prepare for higher education, go to www.gotocollege.ky.gov. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit www.kheaa.com; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call (800) 928-8926, ext. 6-7372.